

that there is no such thing as a benign occupation, as Israelis had once deceived themselves into believing. Our unit not only arrested terrorist suspects but also dragged people out of their beds in the middle of the night to paint over anti-Israel graffiti and rounded up innocents after a grenade attack just to "make a presence," in army terminology. At night, in our tent, we argued about the wisdom of turning soldiers into policemen of a hostile civilian population that didn't want us there and which we didn't want as part of our society.

A majority of Israelis emerged from the first intifada convinced that we need to do everything possible to end the occupation and ensure that our children don't serve as enforcers of Gaza's despair. That was why I initially supported the 1993 Oslo peace process that took a terrible gamble on Yasser Arafat's supposed transformation from terrorist to peacemaker. And even after it became clear that Arafat and other Palestinian leaders never intended to accept Israel's legitimacy, I supported the unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, simply to extricate us from that region, knowing that we would not receive peace in return.

And now my son is fighting in Gaza. The conflict he and his friends confront is far worse than my generation's experience in Gaza. In our time, we were confronted with mere rocks and Molotov cocktails; my son faces Iranian-supplied anti-tank weapons—one more price we will pay, along with the missile attacks on our towns, for the Gaza withdrawal, just as the Israeli right had warned.

Still, I don't regret that withdrawal. If Israelis are united today about our right to defend ourselves against Gaza's genocidally minded regime, it is at least partly because we are fighting from our international border. My son and his friends have one crucial advantage over my generation's experience in Gaza: They know, as we did not, that Israel was ready to make the ultimate sacrifice for peace, uprooting thousands of its citizens from their homes and endorsing a Palestinian state. My son confronts Gaza knowing that its misery is now imposed by its leaders. He knows that his country was even prepared to share its most cherished national asset, Jerusalem, with its worst enemy, Arafat, for the sake of preventing this war. That empowers him with the moral self-confidence he will need to get through the coming days. The face of my Gaza enemy was a teenager throwing rocks; the face of Gavriel's Gaza enemy is a suicide bomber.

But we are hardly free of moral anxiety. Even as I pray for Gavriel's physical safety, I pray too for his spiritual well-being: that his tank doesn't accidentally shell civilians, that he isn't caught in some terrible mistake, which can so easily happen in a war zone where terrorists hide behind innocent people.

For the past eight years, Israel has fought a single war with shifting fronts, moving from suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv to Katyusha attacks on Israeli towns near the Lebanon border to Qassam missiles on Israeli towns near the Gaza border. That war has targeted civilians, turning the home front into the actual front. And it has transformed the nature of the conflict from a nationalist struggle over Palestinian statehood to a holy war against Jewish statehood. Except for a left-wing fringe, most Israelis recognize the conflict in Gaza as part of a larger war that has been declared against our being and that we must fight.

But how? Even some right-wingers are saying that we should have declared a unilateral cease-fire after the initial airstrike and then dared Hamas to continue shelling our towns, rather than risk another quagmire. And even

some left-wingers are saying that we should now destroy the Hamas regime and then offer to turn Gaza over to international control or, if possible, an inter-Arab force led by Egypt. Every option is potentially disastrous. Most Israelis agree on two points: that we cannot live with a jihadist statelet on our border, and that we cannot become occupiers of Gaza again.

The despair of Gaza is contagious. One friend, a Likud supporter, said to me, "I don't know what to hope for anymore."

Meanwhile, I try to reassure myself about Gavriel's safety. Growing up in Jerusalem during the suicide bombings in the early 2000s, he has already known danger, intimacy with death. A 13-year-old acquaintance was stoned to death, and was so mutilated that he could be identified only by his DNA. A friend lost the use of an eye in a bus bombing on his way to school. At least now, Gavriel and his friends can defend themselves. Perhaps one reason most of them volunteered for combat units was because now the generation of the suicide bombings can finally fight back.

Just before the conflict in Gaza began, I happened to visit Gavriel at his base. His unit's barracks had been turned into what young Israelis call a "zula"—a hangout. There were muddy couches, chairs without backs, a darbuka drum, a TV (Jay Leno was on). It could have been a teenage scene anywhere in the West, except that hanging on the walls were Hamas banners captured by the unit's veteran members in a previous round of fighting in Gaza. In a corner of the room hung a photograph of a fallen soldier. Across the bottom someone had written, "What was the rush, Shachar? Why did you have to leave us so soon?"

Even now, perhaps especially now, I feel that our family is privileged to belong to the Israeli story. Gavriel, grandson of a Holocaust survivor, is part of an army defending the Jewish people in its land. This is one of those moments when our old ideals are tested anew and found to be still vital. That provides some comfort as Sarah and I wait for the next text message.

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CONGRATULATING THE HAMILTON EMERALD KNIGHTS UPON WINNING THE 2008 NEW YORK STATE BOYS SOCCER CLASS D CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. JOHN M. McHUGH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Mr. McHUGH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Hamilton Central School District Emerald Knights upon winning the 2008 New York State boys soccer class D championship. This was the second state boys soccer championship team in Hamilton Central School's history, and I am proud to represent them.

On November 16, 2008, the Hamilton Emerald Knights won the New York State class D championship when they defeated the defending state champion Chazy Eagles, also from my upstate New York Congressional District, by a score of 4–3. In that game, the Emerald Knights rallied to come from behind and win

after trailing the Eagles 3–0 with less than 18 minutes to play. Senior midfielder and First-Team All-State selection, Nathan Steward, tallied the Emerald Knight's first goal in the 63rd minute bending in a 30-yard shot from the right side into the top of the net. Senior midfielder Matthew Broedel cut the Knights' deficit to 3–2, netting a low shot to the far post with 8:05 left in regulation. Then, with 2:44 remaining, Nathan Steward's free kick once again found the leg of Matthew Broedel, whose second goal tied the game at 3–3. The game was finally settled only 42 seconds into the sudden death period when sophomore forward Daniel Kraynak scored the game-winner for the Knights on a pass from senior Alex Thompson. William Keever's three saves in goal and a solid defensive effort helped earn Hamilton its first State championship since 1997. Of note, Matthew Broedel was named championship MVP.

The Hamilton Emerald Knights completed the 2008 season with a record of 22–2. They were coached by Brian Latella and assistant coaches Brian Rose and Trevor Chapman; William Dowsland is the athletic director. Other team members were Alex Bowie, Bobby Dick, Phil Douchinsky, James Gorman, Blaine Holcomb, Mikey Jones, Adam MacBain, Brendon Meeks, Daniel Meeks, Jake Smith, Josh Sorosky, Jack Sullivan, Joe Taranto, Drew Thompson, Keith Upton and Tyler White. The scorekeepers were Robert Reed and Tim Noel. The managers were Lucas Ord, Brian Meeks, Ben Knecht, and Ryan Tuttle. Team statisticians were Kaitlyn Askew and Alison Hansen.

Madam Speaker, it is an honor to have the opportunity to recognize the Hamilton Emerald Knights boys soccer team for their significant accomplishment.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CHARITABLE DRIVING TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2009

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Mr. PETRI. Madam Speaker, today, I am introducing the Charitable Driving Tax Relief Act of 2009 to remove a serious "disincentive that limits the participation of many in charitable activities. Charitable organizations play an important role in our society, and it is important that Congress not stand in the way by penalizing those who wish to offer their services to these groups.

Under current law, individuals that volunteer their time and energy by driving their personal vehicles on behalf of a charitable group can end up with an unpleasant surprise in the form of an unanticipated tax bill. Specifically, volunteer drivers receiving reimbursement for the use of their vehicle are taxed on these payments to the extent that they exceed 14 cents per mile. This treatment stands in stark contrast to the 55 cent allowance for reimbursement for the business use of that same vehicle.

The Charitable Driving Tax Relief Act will equalize the tax treatment of charitable reimbursements with those received for business driving because the point of the payment is essentially the same, that is, to cover the cost